

CHAPTER 5: OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 - Significant Unavoidable Impacts

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(a)(b) requires an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to identify and focus on the significant environmental effects of the project, including effects that cannot be avoided if the project were implemented.

Based on the analysis contained in this EIR, the County has determined that the project would result in the following significant and unavoidable impacts:

- **Project Level:** Operational impact related to unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) at Coggins Drive at Las Juntas Way intersection under Opening Year with Project.
- **Cumulative Level:** Operational impact related to unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) at Coggins Drive at Las Juntas Way intersection under Cumulative Year with Project.

5.2 - Growth-inducing Impacts

There are two types of growth-inducing impacts that a project may have: direct and indirect. To assess the potential for growth-inducing impacts, the project's characteristics that may encourage and facilitate activities that individually or cumulatively may affect the environment must be evaluated (CEQA Guidelines § 15126.2(d)). CEQA Guidelines, as interpreted by the County, state that a significant growth-inducing impact may result if the project would:

- Induce substantial population growth in an area (for example, by proposing new homes and commercial or industrial businesses beyond the land use density/intensity envisioned in the general plan);
- Substantially alter the planned location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the population of an area; or
- Include extensions of roads or other infrastructure not assumed in the general plan or adopted capital improvements project list, when such infrastructure exceeds the needs of the project and could accommodate future developments.

Direct growth-inducing impacts occur when the development of a project imposes new burdens on a community by directly inducing population growth, or by leading to the construction of additional developments in the same area. Also included in this category are projects that remove physical obstacles to population growth (such as a new road into an undeveloped area or a wastewater treatment plant with excess capacity that could allow additional development in the service area). Construction of these types of infrastructure projects cannot be considered isolated from the development they facilitate and serve. Projects that physically remove obstacles to growth, or projects that indirectly induce growth may provide a catalyst for future unrelated development in an area such as a new residential community that requires additional commercial uses to support residents.

The project site is located in Central Contra Costa County. Implementing the project would directly induce growth in the County, but not in a manner that is beyond the Countywide land use densities/intensities envisioned in the Contra Costa County General Plan. The California Department of Finance (CDF) estimated the total population of unincorporated Contra Costa County to be 172,513 as of January 1, 2018.¹ Contra Costa County is projected to have a population of 1,166,670 in 2020.² The project would develop 284 residential units and would be expected to result in a population of 818 persons. Conservatively assuming that all 818 residents would be new to unincorporated Contra Costa County, the project's population would represent 0.47 percent of the total 172,513 population of unincorporated Contra Costa County as reported by the CDF in 2018. Therefore, direct population growth as a result of the project is considered negligible. In addition, this direct population growth associated with the project would be consistent with growth projections for the County as projected by the CDF.

In addition to residential units, direct growth from the project would include ancillary and recreational facilities. This growth would add five jobs under the project. The project is an infill development and the surrounding area has a suburban, transit-oriented residential character. Infrastructure and services would be expanded to serve the project, without significant excess capacity. Thus, would not encourage additional growth beyond that already planned for in the Contra Costa County General Plan. As a result, the project would create minimal to no indirect growth that would be inconsistent with CDF projections for the County.

The project would also not significantly and adversely affect the permanent jobs/housing balance. The project would create a minor amount of nonresidential development and jobs but would not create a housing demand above what would otherwise occur in the County. The project would also include 284 residential units and up to 818 new residents. The area is well-served by transportation infrastructure, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Pleasant Hill/Contra Costa Centre Station located 0.12 mile west of the project site. Therefore, housing included as part of the project would help the County achieve a more even job/housing balance by providing much-needed housing.

The project is an infill development and, thus, implementing the project would not require the extension of electrical, natural gas, or water utility infrastructure, but would require connections to existing utilities infrastructure on and adjacent to the project site. The project would not extend urban infrastructure other than to the project site and, thus, would not induce growth in other areas, because the adjacent areas are already developed and zoned residential. Furthermore, the project would be compatible with the surrounding residential uses and not pressure adjacent properties to redevelop with new or different land uses. As a result, it is not anticipated that nearby residents would relocate. Therefore, the project would not remove a barrier to growth nor create an indirect population increase.

Since the project would not result in indirect growth, negatively alter the existing jobs/housing balance, or be inconsistent with the Contra Costa County General Plan or CDF direct growth projections for the County, the growth-inducing impact would be less than significant.

¹ California Department of Finance (CDF). 2018. Report E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State. May.

² California Department of Finance (CDF). 2018. Total Estimated and Projected Population for California and Counties: 2010 to 2060 1-year Increments. January.

5.3 - Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

As mandated by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c), the EIR must address significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the project. Specifically, such an irreversible environmental change would occur if:

- The project would involve a large commitment of nonrenewable resources;
- Irreversible damage can result from environmental accidents associated with the project; and
- The proposed consumption of resources is not justified (e.g., the project results in the wasteful use of energy). (Refer to Section 3.17, Utilities and Service Systems, which addresses this topic in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Appendix J)

The project involves the construction and operation of an apartment building. The residential building would consist of 21 studio apartments, 178 one-bedroom apartments, and 85 two-bedroom apartments, totaling 284 units, with an average unit size of 863 square feet. The proposed residential units would include 36 affordable housing units: 24 moderate-income and 12 very-low-income. The site design would result in 17 percent of the site being left as open space or landscaped area. Additionally, approximately 15 percent of the trees within the site boundaries and directly adjacent to the project site would be preserved.

Construction debris recycling practices would be expected to allow for the recovery and reuse of building materials such as concrete, lumber, and steel and would limit disposal of these materials, some of which are non-renewable. Construction would include the use of building materials, such as petroleum-based products and metals that cannot reasonably be recreated. Construction also would involve significant consumption of energy, usually petroleum-based fuels that deplete supplies of nonrenewable resources. Construction of structures and infrastructure would consume energy and water; however, because of its temporary and one-time nature, construction under the project would not represent a significant irreversible use of resources.

Once construction is complete, the land uses associated with the project would use some nonrenewable fuels to heat and light structures and consume water. The new residential and recreational uses would be required to be built to and adhere to the latest adopted edition of the California Green Building Standards Code, which includes a number of standards that would reduce energy demand, water consumption, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation that would collectively reduce the demand for resources. This would result in the emission and generation of less pollution and effluent and lessen the severity of corresponding environmental effects. Thus, although the project would result in an irretrievable commitment of non-renewable resources, energy for heat and light and water for irrigation and plumbing would not be consumed inefficiently, unnecessarily, or wastefully.

Furthermore, the proposed residential uses do not have the potential to cause significant environmental accidents through releases into the environment, as they would not involve large quantities of hazardous materials (see Section 3.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials). According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the project site is not located in

a Severe or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone,³ and the closest designated “High” fire hazard zone is located approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast of the project site. Because the project site has not previously experienced wildfire and is not located in or near an area of steep terrain or historical wildfire burn nor experiences consistent high winds, the project site would not be prone to wildfire risk (see Section 3.18, Wildfire). In addition, as discussed in Section 3.13, Public Services, the existing fire protection facilities would be adequate to serve the project, and the project would not result in a significant and unavoidable impact related to the need for new or altered fire protection facilities. Thus, implementation of the project’s proposed residential and recreational uses do not have the potential to result in significant environmental accidents related to wildfire hazards (see Section 3.18, Wildfire) and would not result in significant irreversible environmental changes.

³ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2009. Fire Resource and Assessment Program.